Speech for the
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada,
Vic Toews, Q.C.
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Introduction

Thank you, Commander [David] Easthon, for your kind introduction.

Ambassador Wilkins, Minister Kwinter, Chief Blair, Mayor Miller, Dr. Mukherjee, Commissioner Zaccardelli, Commissioner Boniface, members of the FBINAA, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I am very pleased to bring greetings to the delegates of the 42 nd annual conference of the FBI National Academy Associates. We are honoured that Canada is hosting this prestigious event, which is being held for the first time ever outside the United States.

With this year's theme of "International Cooperation - Navigating the World," it is quite fitting that this event is being held in Canada. I believe that Canada and the United States are a shining example of neighbouring countries that have thrived thanks to our shared spirit of international cooperation.

Canada's Support for Law Enforcement

The Government of Canada is committed to working with international law enforcement agencies, our municipal and provincial police forces across Canada, and other authorities to fight crime. We are also committed to supporting the brave men and women of our national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Today's RCMP officers must tackle a wide range of challenges, such as urban crime, cyber crime, organized crime, counterfeit goods, money laundering, and terrorism - just to name a few. And the Government of Canada is proud to help provide the tools and support the RCMP needs to do its work.

In the recent budget, we committed funds to begin recruiting up to 1,000 RCMP personnel and to hire additional federal prosecutors over the next two years. This will help target critical issues such as drugs and border security.

To help train new recruits, we added funding to expand the RCMP Training Academy in Regina.

We also committed funds that will support specific initiatives, such as:

- fighting money laundering and terrorism;

- integrating enforcement teams to fight currency counterfeiting;
- dealing with emergencies; and
- preventing youth crime, especially as it relates to guns, gangs, and drugs.

Working Together

These investments are an important part of the fight against crime. But equally important is the need for law enforcement agencies to integrate and coordinate their efforts. We need to work together. Canada, the United States, and other nations must combine their efforts in policing, security, and intelligence.

In a world where crimes and jurisdictions can overlap, it is important to develop a comprehensive approach to public safety.

Here in Canada, the RCMP does this in numerous ways.

For example, the RCMP manages the National DNA Data Bank on behalf of all Canadian police forces - in a way that respects the law and protects Canadians' right to privacy.

The RCMP also has officers on the ground in Afghanistan to help with our efforts in security and development in that country. Since 1989, Canada has deployed more than 2,100 officers - from the RCMP and other forces - to support international policing missions around the globe.

Another great example of integration is the use of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Units to fight organized crime. These units include municipal and provincial police, the RCMP, and federal agencies - including my department, the Department of Justice - to form a cohesive group to combat organized crime.

Combating International Crime at our Borders

At the international level, Canada will continue to work closely with other countries - including the United States - in the fight against crime.

More and more, we realize that there are crimes and illicit activities that do not respect borders, such as terrorism and the movement of illegal drugs, guns and funding.

The RCMP and Canada Border Services Agency work closely with other federal departments, the U.S. and international law enforcement partners to protect the integrity of Canada's borders and marine ports.

One example is the Integrated Border Enforcement Team program. These teams include local, state and provincial enforcement agencies in both Canada and the U.S. They share information and work together daily on issues relating to national security, organized crime and other criminal activities along the border.

And last September, the RCMP and the U.S. Coast Guard undertook a pilot project to patrol the waterways in the Windsor/Detroit region. The "Shiprider" program aimed to enhance inland marine border security.

As well, to remove policy and operational impediments to cross-border law enforcement and intelligence cooperation, our two nations work through a Cross-Border Crime Forum. This will deal with technical communication issues and standardized models on dealing with national security threats and organized crime groups.

Because of such activities, both of our countries are better able to detect and prevent criminal activities that could pose a serious threat to national and international security.

One concrete example of the challenges we face on the international front is stopping the export of stolen vehicles from Canada. We must, unfortunately, assume that the profits made from vehicles stolen from Canada and sold abroad are being invested in other illegal enterprises.

The Canada Border Services Agency is a major player in the Government of Canada's response to this issue. The CBSA examines suspicious containers being exported from Canada and has had some success identifying vehicles - often high-end vehicles - that have been stolen in Canada or the United States and are being exported abroad.

And the RCMP works closely with the CBSA's inspectors and other domestic, American and international law enforcement and government partners to protect the integrity of Canada's ports.

The budget investments I mentioned earlier will significantly increase our capacity to deal with organized crime, and increase our ability to work with other law enforcement agencies in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere.

We must continue to work closely with our partners in the provinces and territories, the private sector, and the law enforcement and criminal justice communities to address these issues.

Domestic Justice Agenda

On the domestic front, my department has been pursuing a number of aggressive reforms aimed at tackling crime. This spring, we introduced five new bills that will help clean up our streets and restore safety to our communities.

We reformed our laws with regard to conditional sentencing, so people who commit serious and violent crime will not serve their time at home or in the community. Instead of house arrest, they'll do their time behind bars.

We introduced our Mandatory Minimum Penalties Bill for gun crimes. With this legislation, our new Government is taking a tough stand against violent crime. And we are sending a clear message to gang members and other violent criminals: if you use guns to commit crimes, you will be brought to justice and you will go to jail. Period.

Our Government is strengthening our National DNA Data Bank legislation. These technical reforms will give police better tools to investigate crime. They will further strengthen this crime-solving mechanism, helping our police identify the guilty and exonerate the innocent.

Our Government has also made a commitment to crack down on street racing. Street racing is not about kids having fun. It's reckless. It's dangerous. And all too often it kills. With our new legislation, people who treat our public streets as racetracks will be dealt with more seriously.

And finally, we introduced legislative proposals that would raise the age at which youth can consent to sexual activity from 14 to 16 years. With the rise of new technologies such as the Internet, it has become increasingly important to increase the safety and security of Canadian families. By raising the age of protection by two years, the Government is targeting those who sexually prey upon some of society's most vulnerable individuals.

Conclusion

All of these initiatives represent a balanced yet tough approach to combating crime. Criminals will no longer be coddled. Their rights will not trump those of their victims, or take precedence over

community safety.

As Minister of Justice, I will continue to work hard on behalf of all Canadians to help make this great country a safer, more secure place to live. And I will continue to work with my counterparts in the United States and other nations to find lasting solutions to the global issues that affect us all.

International cooperation - that is the key. By working together, we become stronger, and are better equipped to create the safe, secure, and peaceful world we all aspire to build.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I hope you all have a pleasant stay here in Toronto, and I wish you a productive and inspiring conference.

Thank you.

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